

Strep Throat and Scarlet Fever

Dear Parent or Guardian,

You are being provided with this fact sheet:

☐ **because you or your child may have been exposed to strep throat.** If you believe your child has developed **strep throat**, contact your medical provider. Notify your child care provider or preschool immediately after the diagnosis has been made.

☐ **for informational purposes only.**

What causes strep throat and scarlet fever?

Both strep throat and scarlet fever are illnesses caused by group A streptococcal bacteria. These bacteria are often found in the throat and on the skin of humans. Some people may carry these bacteria in their throat or on the skin and have no symptoms of illness.

What are the symptoms of strep throat and scarlet fever?

Symptoms of illness appear 1 to 3 days after an individual is exposed to the bacteria. Strep throat usually brings on sudden fever, sore throat, swollen tonsils, and swollen lymph nodes in the neck and throat areas. Scarlet fever is a sandpaper-like rash that sometimes occurs in people that have strep throat. The rash generally first appears as tiny red bumps on the chest and abdomen and may spread to other parts of the body. The rash may last for 2 to 7 days. A fever of 101°F or higher is also common.

How is strep throat and scarlet fever spread?

These bacteria are spread through direct contact with mucus from the nose or throat of persons who are infected. Both illnesses are usually spread from person to person by coughing or direct contact with someone who has the bacteria. Casual contact rarely leads to illness. Drinking from the same glass or eating from the same plate as a sick person could also spread illness. The best way to keep from getting sick is to wash your hands often and avoid sharing eating utensils.

Who is at risk for getting strep throat or scarlet fever?

Strep throat occurs at all ages but it is most common in school-aged children and teens. Scarlet fever is usually seen in children under the age of 18 years and older than 3 years.

How is strep throat or scarlet fever diagnosed?

Diagnosis of streptococcal infections is done through laboratory testing.

How are strep throat and scarlet fever treated?

Both illnesses are treated with antibiotics.

* Fever is defined as: temperature of 101°F (38.3°C) or higher.

How is the spread of strep throat and scarlet fever reduced?

- Prompt identification and treatment of strep infections helps reduce further infections and possible complications.

Child Care Health Program

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Adapted from the Snohomish Health District

- People who have these illnesses should avoid direct or close contact with others.
- Dispose of facial tissues properly and teach children to cover their mouth and nose when they cough or sneeze.
- Avoid sharing eating dishes, drinking cups, or utensils.
- Use a sanitizing solution to help minimize germs on surfaces such as tabletops, counters, and toys.
- Good handwashing practices by those infected will also help to reduce further infections.

Exclude from group setting?

Children with strep throat or scarlet fever should not return to school or child care until at least 12 hours after beginning antibiotics.

Reference:

American Academy of Pediatrics

- Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 5th Edition. Pages 167-168

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

- Group A Streptococcal (GAS) Disease website

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